

Fisheries Habitat Workgroup  
November 12, 2014 Meeting Minutes

In attendance: John Page Williams, Marek Topolski, Margaret McGinty, Alexis Park, Bonnie Bick, Jim Long, Roger Trageser, Roman Jesien, Matt Lawrence, Carrie Hoover, Micah Danmeyer, Eric Schott, Andy Lazur, Johnny Shockly, Doug Legum, Helen Stewart, Jim Gracie

The meeting began at 2:00 pm:

**Nominations and Election of Chair**

Jim Gracie was nominated, seconded, and unanimously voted in as chair of the workgroup.

**Updates:**

Eric Schott attended this meeting via conference call and additional opportunities for members to participate this way were discussed.

ACTION: Margaret will work on conference call capabilities for future meetings.

Workgroup members received the affiliate spreadsheet, which is an exhaustive list of individuals/groups that could be reached out to for help with reaching/attaining workgroup goals. Workgroup members are to review the list and identify any organizations for which they would/could serve as a liaison between the Habitat Workgroup and the organization, and should also include a point of contact.

ACTION: Margaret will update and resend spreadsheet out to workgroup and each member is asked to review the list and fill it out.

B.A.S.S. Conservation Director is looking for habitat-related articles to include in their monthly newsletter. A brief article describing the workgroup was discussed at the previous meeting and Margaret wrote up a draft and sent it to John Page Williams and Jim Gracie for review and is waiting on feedback.

ACTION: Margaret will resend article to JPW and JG, and will also send it to Roger Trageser and Micah Danmeyer, for review.

Since last meeting several habitat things have come up: a new Bay Agreement has been implemented and the Bay Cabinet recently met – for every goal in the new agreement an individual was indentified to lead the writing of a strategy document to implement the goals. Two goals of particular interest to the workgroup would be the Forage Fish and Fish Habitat outcomes, with Healthy Watersheds being of interest as well. It was discussed how the workgroup would be the body that could influence how the various strategy outcomes are implemented/applied by local governments. Primary focus would be conservation, while secondary focus is restoration.

ACTION: Workgroup members can visit Bay Program website to obtain more information and learn about various goals and their outcomes, and possibly how to become involved with strategy goal development groups (see <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page> and <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/managementstrategies>). Helen will send preliminary plan to the workgroup that outlines the plans/ideas the Healthy Watersheds goal team has put together so far. In March 2015 there will be a comment period for the goals/outcomes and prior to this Helen will send finalized plan to workgroup. Margaret will keep the workgroup in the loop on the Forage Fish and Fish Habitat goals as well.

Margaret talked about a presentation given to the Sustainable Fisheries GIT by Troy Hartley of VIMS Sea Grant. Hartley conducted an analysis of the wording used in FMPs versus local planning documents (e.g. comp plans) and found that while there was not a lot of common terminology, there were several common thoughts and ideas, and regular communication was needed to encourage the adoption of Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management. The

workgroup discussed how this could be used as an outreach or communication strategy in terms of bridging the gap – getting local planners to think about fish and fish habitat when they're putting together their comp plans.

**ACTION:** Margaret will contact Troy Hartley to schedule a presentation to the workgroup either in person or via conference call to share the results of his study. Development of a goal related to communication and outreach to local governments is needed so they understand the impacts of the decisions they're making and so alternatives can be offered if they are highly concerned about conserving fish habitat.

Margaret mentioned that an Ecological Evaluation Workgroup was being put together by DNR, with an economist on staff, to develop a report for MD that details the true value of natural systems (e.g. what is the true value of a forested buffer versus the cost of an engineered substitute when habitat is destroyed). This could be used as an effective outreach and education tool when reaching out to local governments.

**ACTION:** Margaret will circulate the proposal and any updates as they come along.

Need (and potential legislative requirement) for a fisheries advisory group at the county level was discussed. There are already forestry and agricultural advisory groups for when counties are reviewing and updating their comp plans, but fish community is currently being lumped into the ag section which is not helpful/appropriate since all it contains are agricultural regs.

**ACTION:** Jim Long will review COMAR to determine legislative requirements for advisory groups at the local/county level. Depending on what is learned, the workgroup will then decide whether legislation to amend the Land Use Article (to require a fishery advisory council) should be promoted; Jim Gracie can arrange for a meeting with the appropriate parties if there is an interest.

Jim Gracie mentioned that a very effective communication and outreach tool was Eric Eckl's 'Water Words That Work' and recommended that the group try to have him come and give his presentation to them.

**ACTION:** Margaret will look into scheduling Eric Eckl for a presentation.

Micah suggested a focus project in Jones Falls for the workgroup, with the goal of addressing the temperature regime for trout. Margaret suggested this project could serve as a test case to address the communication and outreach skills of the workgroup.

**ACTION:** Jim Gracie will schedule a meeting with Micah, John Page, Roger, Eric, and Margaret to develop a strategy to focus this project.

The second Wednesday in December space is not available at CBF due to their Annual Meeting.

**ACTION:** Margaret will send out a Doodle Poll to schedule date and location of next meeting.

### **Goals:**

The workgroup continued discussion and formulation of goals to be considered, and the following goals were proposed:

Pursue adoption of MDE's Integrated Impaired Waters list and development of TMDL for temperature in natural trout streams.

Inform and influence/enhance implementation of fish passage related issues (low head dams, chemical barriers, road crossings, impervious surfaces) at local level and with citizen input.

Impervious surface limits.

Toxics and chemical impairment in regards to migratory routes, as well as endocrine disruptors.

ACTION: Workgroup would like additional information, research and guidance, and education on stormwater runoff, toxic effects on fish, and impervious surface limits.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.

**Next Meeting: TBT via Doodle Poll**